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**The Horses of the Hills**  
**And other Verses**



# The Horses of the Hills

And other Verses.

By

Marie E. J. Pitt.



MELBOURNE :  
THOMAS C. LOTHIAN  
100 FLINDERS STREET

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## CONTENTS

The Horses of the Hills	-	-	-	-	7
Veiled	-	-	-	-	10
The Reiver	-	-	-	-	12
Gold and Grey	-	-	-	-	14
Ballade of the Road	-	-	-	-	15
Mountain Myrtle	-	-	-	-	16
Woman	-	-	-	-	18
The Clan Call	-	-	-	-	20
Ballade of Devonport	-	-	-	-	23
The Old Love	-	-	-	-	25
Lost	-	-	-	-	27
Adieu	-	-	-	-	29
Discontent	-	-	-	-	31
Ishmael	-	-	-	-	33
'Twixt Briton and Boer	-	-	-	-	37
Ballade of Dreams	-	-	-	-	38
Spindrift	-	-	-	-	40
Ballade of Illusion	-	-	-	-	42
To-night	-	-	-	-	44
Rejected	-	-	-	-	45
Reveille	-	-	-	-	48
The Enslavement	-	-	-	-	50
Evil	-	-	-	-	51
Ballade of Autumn	-	-	-	-	52
June Roses	-	-	-	-	54
A Year Ago	-	-	-	-	56
The Destroyers	-	-	-	-	57
The Lost Fairies	-	-	-	-	60
The Rebel	-	-	-	-	62
Watching	-	-	-	-	68
The Talisman	-	-	-	-	69
The Heathen of To-day	-	-	-	-	70

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A Sea Song	-	-	-	-	-	73
A Gallop of Fire	-	-	-	-	-	74
Anathema	-	-	-	-	-	76
Red Poppies—White Roses	-	-	-	-	-	77
At Evensong	-	-	-	-	-	78
Song of the Axe	-	-	-	-	-	80
Ships	-	-	-	-	-	82
Recompense	-	-	-	-	-	84
Society	-	-	-	-	-	85
Bitter-Sweet	-	-	-	-	-	86
The City of Sloth	-	-	-	-	-	87
The Undersong	-	-	-	-	-	90
Disinherited	-	-	-	-	-	92
Wy Yung	-	-	-	-	-	94
A Fragment	-	-	-	-	-	95
La Misere	-	-	-	-	-	96
Crooked River	-	-	-	-	-	97
Soul Ferry	-	-	-	-	-	100
Prescience	-	-	-	-	-	102
Ta-Mahinna	-	-	-	-	-	103
Hamilton	-	-	-	-	-	106
Phases	-	-	-	-	-	108
Look Up	-	-	-	-	-	109
The Keening	-	-	-	-	-	110
City Hunger	-	-	-	-	-	114

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With something of an apology, and more than a regret for inequalities and inconsistencies, inevitable and inseparable from hasty execution amid a more than usually hostile environment, I send forth these songs of a wilding Australian harp.

MARIE E. J. PITT.

Melbourne, 20th May, 1911.

*Who finds the track, who follows the track,  
Must measure him steel for steel,  
With the sword of flame 'gainst the road he came,  
And the fang'd head under his heel.*

\* \* \* \*

*Who hears the song, who answers the song,  
Must fight for his faith afar,  
Where they tramp to the goal of the outlaw soul  
By the light of a vagrant star.*

## THE HORSES OF THE HILLS.

When cohorts of September  
Are marching down amain,  
We waken and remember  
Our fathers' fields again.  
Old Winter's ice-bonds slacken,  
His voice is waning low,  
And sunward peeps the bracken  
From winding sheets of snow.

The dumb earth wakes and shivers,  
Young winds our heralds are,  
And mortals call us rivers  
Who know not what we are.  
Ere mastodon or urus  
Might dare the steamy rift,  
From Java to Honduras  
Our hoofs had scarred the drift.

Honduras east to Java  
Our hieroglyphs were beat  
On prehistoric lava  
By old silurian sleet.  
And seaward still our course is  
When Spring's glad fanfare thrills  
And wakes the wild white horses,  
The horses of the hills.

Our dams came south and nor'ward,  
Our dams came east and west,  
Hard driven is from shoreward,  
And laid them down to rest.  
With whips of storm behind them  
They wheeled and whirled and broke,  
And fled by roads assigned them,  
Ere we in wonder woke.

In Winter's cave we slumbered,  
Like sluggards in our chains,  
For days and nights unnumbered,  
Nor dreamed of our domains:  
But cohorts of September  
Are marching down amain;  
We waken and remember  
Our father's fields again.

Off cape and fretted foreland  
Ten thousand hoofs a-drum,  
Our sires who hold the shoreland,  
The white sea stallions come.  
O'er drift and weed and spinney  
Inshore their leaders stamp  
And wheel and snort and whinny  
To call us to their camp.

'Neath dawn or noontide splendour  
Inborne on winds of dream,  
In vibrant tone and tender  
We hear the call supreme;  
High o'er the locked land forces  
A clarion call it shrills—  
"Come home! come home, white horses!  
White horses of the hills!"

O! vain on back and shoulder  
His harness Winter bound,  
And fenced with brake and boulder  
His mountain stockyard round;  
Disdaining bond or shackle,  
With plunge and swerve and shy,  
We break from bar and tackle  
And thunder in reply.

Down thro' the gorge's shadows  
Our rolling squadrons burst,  
Forth from the white snow meadows  
Wherein our strength was nursed.  
By hut and homestead swinging  
Full speed and flanks afoam,  
We hear the land wind singing  
"Come home! white steeds, come home!"

No rider sits astride us;  
No fences bid us stay;  
And none so bold as ride us  
Cross country to the bay.  
Who track our trampled courses  
Bear witness to our wills,  
We are the wild white horses,  
The horses of the hills.

## VEILED.

Sojourner of the peaks divine  
No gusts of human folly sweep,  
Fenced from the shadow and the shine  
That dapple Life's disastrous deep!  
Hushed is the world-heart's stormy beat,  
Earth's clanging discords faint and fail  
In holy silence round thy feet,  
O Sister of the sombre veil!

To steadfast eyes undimmed of tears,  
And lips that have no boon to crave  
From largess of the laughing years  
That flit like shadows to the grave,  
Rise there no ghosts of "Used to be"  
To mock the quest of Holy Grail  
By guarded glance and suppliant knee?  
O Sister of the sombre veil!

Noon glooms to dusk—the desert days  
Slip slow by prayer-enchanted leas—  
Pale pilots of the parted ways,  
Wan warders of the Silent Keys!  
In catacombs of twilit years,  
What fear-forms frightened Passion pale?  
Or Jesus' cross or Mary's tears?  
O Sister of the sombre veil!



O Woman, is thy smile a mask?  
Life cries for more than bread to eat;  
"The daily round, the common task,"  
Are these beatitude complete?  
If faith be first I stand aghast  
In outer dark beyond the pale  
Of thine, the first faith and the last—  
O Sister of the sombre veil!

## THE REIVER.

The floods are out on the flats to-night,  
Moaning and maddened and wild and red,  
Like a hooded serpent ready to smite,  
Old Mitchell rears in his straitened bed;  
Quick! Lords of the cattle and crops, your dole!  
The reiver river takes toll, takes toll!

Hope for no harvest of eager hands,  
The ripened ears and the swollen cribs!  
The sludge-bar, tossed on the hungry sands,  
That gapes like a skeleton's Sundered ribs,  
The break and the blight and the far-flung shoal  
Of the reiver river take toll, take toll!

The lean teams lagged at the furrow end,  
And the plumed green army stood brave anon,  
Now from mourning upland to river bend  
The whisper is hushed and the plumes are gone,  
Only the waters a death-dirge roll  
Where the reiver river takes toll, takes toll!

Plunder, full plunder of horn and hoof,  
Of torn green tresses and whitening bone,  
And a darker tribute, deep housed aloof  
Where the vespering pines on the hillside  
moan,  
Man, beast and bird, and the twisted bole—  
So the reiver river takes toll, takes toll!

The floods are out on the flats to-night,

Pray if you dare to and hold your breath;  
For a craft rides seaward with never a light,

And the man at her wheel is Pilot Death.

*Was it curlew or plover? Or parting soul?*

*Hush!—the reiver river takes toll, takes toll!*

## GOLD AND GREY.

O lightsome leaps the heart when the year is i' the  
gold!

When the skies are big with promise that the years  
may not withhold,

When we gather in full measure  
Where the Spring has spilt her treasure,  
O the world's a world of pleasure  
When the year is i' the gold!

There's a love for every lover when the year is i' the  
gold,

And for every bee a blossom its heart-sweetness  
doth unfold,

O the fever of insistence  
In the pulsing, blue-veiled distance!  
O the glory of existence  
When the year is i' the gold!

But listless lags the heart when the year is i' the  
grey,

When the bee has quit the blossom, and bright Love  
has flown away,

When the wind-swept leaves are heaping,  
Where the perished blooms are sleeping—  
O the world's a world of weeping  
When the year is i' the grey!

## BALLADE OF THE ROAD.

Between the living and the dead,  
Our waking and our sleep between,  
A ribbon, dark with hues of dread,  
That links the hidden with the seen,  
The Road winds on through Might Have Been,  
By gladsome glades of Gone Before,  
Through dream and doom, by shade and sheen,  
For evermore—for evermore!

And, leaden heart or drooping head,  
By rolling dune, by runnelled dene,  
Still onward sweep the legions, led  
By Judas or by Nazarene;  
And Folly blears, with blots unclean,  
The rainbow raiment Beauty wore,  
And Fancy mourns her exiled queen  
For evermore—for evermore!

The spilt wine flashes rosy red;  
But pale, pale are their lips, I ween,  
Who break with Dearth her bitter bread,  
And drink with Loss her vintage lean;  
Their sighs are sadder than the keen  
Of night winds on a reedy shore,  
Where widowed Grief's grey children glean  
For evermore—for evermore!

Sahara stark, savanna green,  
Though life be cankered to the core,  
The Road winds on through Fate's demesne  
For evermore—for evermore!

## MOUNTAIN MYRTLE.

Myrtle by the mountain rills!  
Dark-plumed monarch stern and scowling,  
You that hear the thunder growling  
And the black sou'-wester howling  
'Mong the wild Tasmanian hills.  
Myrtle by the western springs!  
Harp whose chords have ne'er been smitten,  
Land whose songs have ne'er been written,  
Where no tooth of scorn has bitten  
To the inner heart of things.

Myrtle, myrtle, watching yet,  
Where old Montezuma races  
Down the waterworn rock-faces,  
Singing songs to lonely places  
Set in ways of wind and wet!  
Myrtle, myrtle stern and stark,  
Where they turned them from the questing,  
When their sun of life was westing—  
Still your dark boughs soothe their resting,  
Moaning, moaning in the dark.

Myrtle, myrtle lying low,  
With the moss about you creeping,  
With the torrent round you leaping,  
And the grand old mountain keeping  
Vigil as the seasons go,

Still to me your music comes  
Set in chords august, specific,  
When a storm-voice, weird, terrific,  
Beats across the waste Pacific  
Like the roll of muffled drums.

Guardian of far peaks untrod  
By fierce cloven-hoofed excesses  
And Humanity's distresses,  
Where no clamour for redress is,  
And the hills look up to God,  
Pillars of a larger sky,  
Immemorial altars folden  
Deep in aisles of green and golden,  
Whose white taper-stars are holden  
By supernal hands on high!

On the wings of evenfall  
Soft as clouds their sky-ways wending,  
Or white angel-hosts descending  
With the gift of peace unending  
When the dark is over all,  
Like the sough of Southern seas  
Comes to me the drowsy droning  
Of the wizard priests, intoning,  
When the Western wind is moaning—  
Moaning in the myrtle trees.

## WOMAN.

## A Reply.

“God be sorry for women?” Nay, singer and sister  
woman,

Sing the woman Triumphant!—“the face turned  
from the clod”—

Wave of the mystical ocean, thro’ season and chang-  
ing season,

Intoning its grand Te Deum on cosmical bars of  
God!

Sing the Woman Triumphant!—queen-sybil from  
morn primeval—

Lo! at her nod swung open the portals of Birth  
and Breath,

Fear and the anguish of Fear ’neath her naked feet  
she has trodden

As Over-mistress of Sorrow—derider of dominant  
Death.

Wherefore shall God be sorry? or hearts that are  
wise in women

Pity the shimmering splendour, the woman-waves  
of His sea,

Pity the tremulous tides in the flood of their God-  
ward setting

To the scintillant, white soul-beaches whose sands  
are Eternity?



God be sorry for woman? that men for their sport  
defile her?

Lo! to the dark she has flung them, pilotless, rudderless, blind,

For prey to the shark-toothed foes of their vanity's  
vile creations;

To reap the wrath of the whirlwind where laughing  
they sowed the wind.

Dare man be sorry for God? As the sky to the hills  
thereunder,

As the sea in its ebbing and flowing, Creation's  
image she stands—

Strength with a mask of softness, wisdom with  
meekness hidden,

Serpent and dove commingled, with the torch of  
God in her hands.

Yea! Sing the Woman Triumphant! no dirge but  
a march eternal,

Tabor and clash of cymbals and homage of waving  
palms!

Diapason of life-tides throbbing! Look, weary one,  
doubting sister,

'Tis Mary of Nazareth passes—with the infant  
Christ in her arms.

## THE CLAN CALL.

I patted the head of a pony,  
By a Collins-street kerbstone tied,  
And my soul is sick for the old things  
And the feel of the world outside.

I patted the head of a pony,  
My fingers are tingling yet;  
And I hear the call of the outlands  
Ring over the city's fret.

He was low and little and weedy,  
But he bent his nose to my hand  
In the language that never was written,  
That the horse-lovers understand.

And I feel the beck of the mountains,  
And the worn ways wandering white  
Thro' the ironbarks and the messmates  
Are calling to me to-night.

And I ache in this city prison,  
In this desert of rolling roofs,  
For the lift of snaffle and stirrup,  
For the ring of galloping hoofs,

'Mong the hills where the circling eagle  
Sails dark on the rim o' the day,  
And the yang yangs' shrieking phalanx  
Heralds the stormy fray.

Flemington, Caulfield, Ascot?  
The Derby, the Melbourne Cup?  
The seethe of the surging thousands?  
The steeds with their riders up?

They're tainted with craft of Commerce,  
By minions of Pelf they're ruled,  
With a fig for the game outsider,  
And a curse for the nag that's "pulled."

'Twas a merrier sport and cleaner  
Where the ironstone ranges rung  
To the race that never was written,  
To the steeds that never were sung.

'Twas a merrier sport and sweeter,  
The chestnut against the brown,  
With the weight on the Gippsland gelding  
And a win for the mare, hands down.

On the open road we have won them,  
Close finish and hard-set teeth,  
With God's own breath on our faces  
And His levin of life beneath.

On the open road we have lost them,  
Light-hearted and ridden away;  
For there's never a game worth playing,  
Where the stake is more than the play.

Yes! I'm sick to-night for the old things  
That grip me like living hands,  
In the dark of a world of shadows—  
And I know, while the old faith stands,

With the mate of my soul beside me,  
Light-hearted, without remorse,  
I would tackle The Styx to-morrow  
On a fretting Australian horse.

## BALLADE OF DEVONPORT.

Jasmine and woodbine and rose o' red,  
And maybloom drifted on scented gales,  
O for the song of a season fled!  
Devonport dales! Devonport dales!  
For the scent that flies and the song that fails,  
Like a windy sunset in golds and browns  
Where a lingering glamour of crimson trails,  
Devonport downs! Devonport downs!

Summer and summer have sped and sped  
O'er green and gold of the gorsy vales,  
Where Mersey moans in his seaward bed,  
Devonport dales! Devonport dales!  
Winters have loitered like laggard snails  
Where the upland glooms and the headland  
frowns,  
And the white gull wheels and a wet wind wails,  
Devonport downs! Devonport downs!

And its O! to dream on the hazed hill head,  
And its O! for the glint o' the warm brown sails,  
And the wakes inwoven like wizard's thread,  
Devonport dales! Devonport dales!  
For rock-pool revels and faery grails,  
For the seas that thresh and the surf that drowns,  
Where the white floor shakes to the emerald flails,  
Devonport downs! Devonport downs!

Still the blue hills shimmer, the blown rose pales,  
Devonport dales! Devonport dales!  
Where kiss-me-quicks flaunted their garnet gowns,  
Devonport downs! Devonport downs!

## THE OLD LOVE.

O Melbourne Town's a lady,  
And her eyes are like the stars  
Shining white thro' heaven's bars,  
But I drift in dreams again  
To the lights of Hobart Harbour,  
Laughing lights of Hobart Harbour,  
From the head of The Domain.

There are years o' days between us,  
There's a ghost for every hour  
That the laggard leagues devour;  
But the heart o' me grows fain  
For the lights of Hobart Harbour,  
Lilting lights of Hobart Harbour,  
From the head of The Domain.

O'er the grim sea-walled horizon  
Old Ben Lomond watches yet  
O'er the graves of old regret,  
While I yearn in vain, in vain  
For the lights of Hobart Harbour,  
Laughing lights of Hobart Harbour,  
From the head of The Domain.

Yes! Melbourne Town's a lady,  
And the breath of her is wine;  
But for this old love o' mine  
Wakes the song of heart and brain—  
O the lights of Hobart Harbour!  
Lilting lights of Hobart Harbour,  
From the head of The Domain.



## LOST.

Once, when the pall of the dusk had folden  
The old world, haggard and brown,  
And veiled the purple and rose and golden  
Streets of the Sunset Town,  
And the queen moon came with her wan white  
maidens,  
Gathering stars for her crown,  
We watched them weave her a wondrous garland,  
Ingathered from far and nigh,  
Rubies and sapphires and pearls of starland,  
And you were a king—and I  
Was queen of the islands, the white moon islands  
On the outer rim o' the sky.

The wind sprites wove us a tented palace  
Of amethyst woofed with fawn,  
And the pale moon-lilies for plate and chalice  
We plucked from a peri's lawn,  
While the old star-sentinels marched beneath us  
To the camp of the blood-red dawn.  
Soul of my soul! in a wild red dawning,  
Long left in the years' dim wake,  
Each lost the other for ever and ever;  
But still for the old sake's sake,  
I seek you, aye, 'mid the world-worn faces  
In mazes the earth folk make.

There are stars, bright stars, on the world-ways  
gleaming,  
White pilot stars kind and true;  
But a soul-star beamed on the hills of dreaming  
That never the earth-skies knew.  
Ah, love! for the islands, the lost moon islands,  
Where the bitter-sweet garlands grew!  
There were steps of gold to the isles up yonder,  
In a year that has passed away;  
Shall we ever find them again, I wonder?  
Gleaming in skies o' grey,  
Ever it seems that the stars are weeping,  
While the queen moon answers Nay!

But still in the dusk, when my heart is weeping  
The tears that mine eyes must keep,  
When the great white moon like a ghost comes  
creeping  
Out over the dreamland deep,  
I greet the islands, the pale moon islands,  
That whisper me in my sleep.  
And, aye, when a moonless wild night is falling  
On a blind world choking with fears,  
I hear your voice in the winds a-calling  
Like a song to my startled ears;  
And I rise to follow. But where shall I follow,  
My star of the stormy years?

## ADIEU.

The day is dying! The auspicious day  
That brought from human faith-fires of the North  
A living brand to flash from coast to coast  
And beacon Freedom in Australian skies—  
A levin torch to light the splendid pyre  
Of old dishonours and the blind unfaith  
That bade man rend his brother—Lo! to-day  
Leap high from altared Australasian hills  
The Freedom-fires no wrong shall quench again.

The day is dying! The reluctant day  
That bids us yield to sharper need than ours!  
Because of hope and strength made ours to guard,  
Because of vanquished error, justice won,  
Because of slave-souls pent in bars of greed  
Unnumbered still, in Liberty's behest,  
Here in the red gold sunset of the day  
His message gladdened with diviner gold,  
We give him God-speed—God-speed and farewell.

As fared Ulysses forth, and in the dust  
Troy the accursed sank unto the plain  
Smoking to heaven—Forth, strong soul, fare forth  
To victory of Right o'er Mammon-Might!  
Tho' proud Oppression's gates be Pole and Pole,  
Her boundaries cleave the Sunset and the Dawn,  
Her walls be Himalayahs—shall it reckon?  
A lesser conquest than were flaming Troy;  
And Liberty? Star-Helen lesser prize!

Farewell! God-speed! And if perchance to eyes  
Unwonted spring grief's quick unbidden tears,  
And tightened heartstrings ache—'tis that the sense,  
The over-sense that caught some secret speech,  
Some song-snatch thro' the sunset's parted veil  
No sense interprets, strikes our laughter dumb,  
And hushed we stand ALONE and face the grey  
Of all the twilights leaden merged in one;  
And in some caverned dusk of wistful winds  
Inwoven with aeolian echoes hear  
A human song—nor thrush notes swelled so sweet,  
Nor nightingale sang ever yet so clear  
In throbbing hush of an Italian night.

O Swan song sailing sunward, tho' the dark  
Fold thee in silence, yet the dark doth drift  
Thro' deeps o' Dream toward Islands of the Dawn!

## DISCONTENT.

Of Beauty one shall sing,  
Another Love shall praise,  
As Faith or Fancy wing,  
Or Fashion-flight essays.  
Among life's drabs and greys  
I strike the lyre she lent,  
My dame of wilful ways—  
My Lady Discontent.

Where Wagedom's lashes sting,  
And Debt's grim dolours craze,  
And Custom's usurers wring  
The red gold from the days,  
Their rapine creed to raze,  
To baffle "Cent. per Cent.,"  
A psychic sword she sways—  
My Lady Discontent.

Where rites fallacious cling,  
And Anti-Christ betrays,  
She is the secret spring  
That from the dark doth raise  
Or ghosts of Pere la Chaise,  
Or Veil o' the Temple rent,  
A saviour, still she slays—  
My Lady Discontent.

Yea, Bards, with lights that daze  
Poor souls in bondage pent  
She sets the world ablaze—  
My Lady Discontent.

## ISHMAEL.

Six off, and still unbroken—  
No fretting bridle bar,  
No spur has left its token,  
No girth has left its scar.

Free as the wind that follows  
Its own unfettered will;  
Free as the wheeling swallows,  
He rests or revels still.

The Bush is stall and manger,  
His grooms are wind and sun;  
Dusk chieftain, pallid stranger,  
He payeth toll to none.

The Bush is stall and manger,  
He snorts and stands aloof,  
And flouts the face of danger  
With rout of ringing hoof.

Heads low his comrades waddle  
In weary bonds of draught,  
Galled withers 'neath the saddle,  
Galled ribs against the shaft.

Where jocund kookaburras  
    Make merry on the bough,  
Above the long brown furrows  
    His playmates pull the plough.

On dusty road and dreary,  
    On broken bridle track,  
They wander far and weary,  
    And weary wander back.

Nor one demands his leisure  
    From burden or from chain,  
But waits his master's pleasure  
    To take the track again.

And only he runs idle  
    In pasture lands of Fate,  
Unvexed of bit or bridle  
    Or reckless rider's weight.

Runs idle—who shall blame him?—  
    He flings the gauntlet down,  
The man that dares to tame him  
    Shall take him back to town.

Meet trophy he for vaunting  
    As prize of errant knight,  
Where Fashion's flowers are flaunting  
    And Beauty's eyes are bright.



What lord of lines shall quarrel  
With symmetry superb,  
Strong quarter, mighty barrel,  
Proud crest that shames the curb:

Clean pastern, sinewy shoulder,  
Broad chest where boundeth hard  
A fiercer heart and bolder  
Than fear of men shall yard!

Vaunt not your pampered stallions,  
The slaves of man's decree,  
Base helots they, and hallions,  
Nor peer for such as he.

The sprites of earth and ocean,  
The war of wind and flood,  
Old Freedom's rebel potion,  
Run riot in his blood;

Bold outlaw, reckless liver,  
But by that dainty tread  
And that red nostril's quiver  
Ye know him thoroughbred.

Six off, and still unbroken,  
No saddle mark shall stain  
That satin coat for token  
Of masterdom's domain.

Dream not, your bondage leaden  
That flashing eye shall blur,  
Nor dream those flanks shall redden  
And reek beneath the spur.

A monarch of the ranges,  
A sultan of the plains,  
A spirit that estranges  
Fell Fear from his domains.

Free as the wind that follows  
Its own unfettered will,  
Free as the wheeling swallows,  
He rests or revels still.

## 'TWIXT BRITON AND BOER.

They made a war upon the land—  
In Freedom's name, they said—  
To overthrow the rebel band  
With Kruger at its head.  
They made a war upon the land—  
And Britain's bravest bled.

They drove the foeman from his field,  
They spoiled his tents afar,  
They saw his stubborn horsemen yield  
On reddened fields of war,  
Till like a worn-out meteor, reeled  
And sank his sullen star.

Nor man, nor home, nor beast they spared,  
The flames before them sped,  
And wild and high the roof tree flared  
Above the homeless head,  
And cannon growled, and trumpets blared  
Above the Burgher dead.

At last o'er barn, and byre, and street,  
Died down the flame of woe,  
The last resonant drum had beat,  
The last gun thundered low—  
*There sat on Freedom's lofty seat  
A Leper—white as snow.*

## BALLADE OF DREAMS.

Across the loom the shuttles fly,  
Like random, rippled lights at play  
Upon the road where you, where I,  
Drift down the Valley of To-day;  
White snowdrop stars beside the way  
Illume the flight of fancies fled,  
In some far Spring-time's snowdrop spray  
Our dreams shall live when we are dead.

We quibble over how and why,  
Or vex our souls with "yea" and "nay;"  
Turn all the golden years awry,  
And bid the wheel of pleasure stay;  
And still our webs of hodden grey  
Are shot with many a wizard thread  
That passes not with passing clay—  
Our dreams shall live when we are dead.

The proud, the strong, the brave shall die,  
All flesh shall perish e'en as they;  
Nor love, nor life, nor duty's tie  
Shall hold the fateful hour at bay:  
But past restraining barriers, yea,  
On universal pinions spread,  
A phoenix phalanx o'er decay,  
Our dreams shall live when we are dead.

With cypress gather blooms o' may,  
Beyond the dark the dawn is red;  
Peace! sad one, tho' the gods shall slay,  
Our dreams shall live when we are dead.

## SPINDRIFT.

I dream of wet and where the surf is thrashing  
A long, low coastline, and, nerves astart,  
I lean for the whisper of wavelets washing  
The white-combed beaches and rock-pools swart—  
In a world aflame with the raptures flashing  
From the rose and gold of the sunset's heart.

I dream of the tramp of the leagued battalions,  
Where the grey gulls wheel over Mersey bar,  
When the Storm King loosens his swift white stal-  
lions,  
And cleaves the deep with his mighty car;  
And through black flotillas of spumespun galleons,  
The lighthouse peers like a kindly star.

A scent of white roses from blue hills sleeping,  
Where the sunset burns to a smouldering spark;  
A shimmer of foam where the surge is leaping  
On basalt bulwarks austere and stark;  
And beyond the hollow swells, shoreward sweeping,  
The brown sails beating into the dark.

Brown sails! Brown sails! You have long since  
threaded  
The shadowy course where no helmsman steers,  
With warp wind-wasted, and woof salt-shredded—  
But what of the best of your bold compeers,  
To burdens fettered, to sharp cares wedded,  
Strong soul-ships beating into the years?

Soul-ships that follow an endless questing,  
By coasts uncharted, o'er seas sublime;  
White argos, ever the green swirls breasting  
Towards the magian isles in the sunset clime;  
While the sea-ghosts sob through the years unrest-  
ing  
'Mong the weed-wound wrecks on the shores of  
Time!

Soul-ships that fare where the white steeds thunder  
O'er the green arched domes of the echoing caves!  
Still the sea-kings revel in halls of wonder  
To a wizard music of winds and waves:  
But the drowned men dream not of power or  
plunder,  
Where the lost ships lie in their deep sea graves.  
And the grey years pass, and the drift is scudding  
Over Mersey bar as in years of old;  
And waves are lapping or swells are thudding  
On basalt bulwarks austere and bold,  
'Neath the flame and fawn of the sunset flooding  
White Devonport beaches with rose and gold.

## BALLADE OF ILLUSION.

Glint of woodland, and glamour of dew,  
Reeling riot of sap in the tree,  
Lilt of lark-song aloft in the blue  
Or cicada's importunate glee!  
O to rest on a somnolent lea  
Where the gold of the buttercup glows—  
And the winds bring us guerdon and fee  
From the heart of a mystical rose!

Tho' we winnow the false from the true  
To the sob of Adversity's sea  
For a vision that fired us and flew,  
For a choked inarticulate plea,  
From a valley of Never To Be  
Comes a wind of the morning that blows,  
Incense-laden for you and for me,  
From the heart of a mystical rose.

Tho' a phantom of joy we pursue,  
Tho' it flash like a phantom and flee,  
Tho' life's roses be choked with its rue,  
And vain shadows of shadows are we,  
Tho' dark be the doom we must dree  
In our camps of the sands or the snows,  
Yet our dreams shall be passport and key  
To the heart of a mystical rose.



Sweetheart mine, tho' the gods may decree  
Never mortal may roam where it grows,  
Still earthward a rapture floats free  
From the heart of a mystical rose.

## TO-NIGHT.

It is to-night! The tense strings sob no more:  
Close fast the doors, and draw the sheltering blinds  
Against the vampire broods that hover near,  
Shapeless similitudes of nameless fears.  
Here, love, upon the outmost beetling crag  
Of black oblivion, soft-winged Sleep shall guard  
From fierce, familiar terrors that pursue  
With scourges sharp as death and 'wildering cries  
Of red-fanged packs that hunt in paths of Day.  
It is to-night! To-morrow's wolves are far!

Beloved, kind is Sleep—but still more kind  
The cradling arms of Death. Here on the verge  
Of great forgetfulness, canst thou not hear  
Departing clangour of the 'leaguering hosts  
Swoon on the void, and—like a wailing wind  
From some far shore—the beat of Sorrow's wings  
Die down to peace! Beloved, sleep, nor dream!  
It is to-night! To-morrow's wolves are far!

## REJECTED.

Frost flecked his hair with many a winter's flight,  
And, etched with the sharp pencil of the years,  
His rugged features set in lines of stress  
Match well his knotted hands and toil-thwart form.  
But time that set the silver in his hair  
Steeled his gaunt frame to an endurance grim  
Of which it gives no promise save the tale  
Of each day's toil that wavers not, nor wanes  
In tithe or tittle; but by the unwritten law  
He stands convicted of the deadly crime,  
The thrice accursed crime of being old.  
To-morrow, ten will quarrel for his place,  
Thumbs down—he has it!—let the grey-beard go!  
No more in the arena of to-day  
His place shall know him, nor his strong arms wrest  
From youth-accoutred foes the piteous prize  
Of daily bread—and wherefore shall he turn  
To learn new arts and wield new weapons, now  
That tower of manly strength, which stood the  
    shock  
Of deadly combat, totters at its base,  
And reels before the dastard strategy  
That binds his chained limbs to the conqueror's  
    wheel?  
For him no mercy stroke of swift, bright steel,

No lightning-pang that brings oblivion  
With cradling arms of peace to pillow him;  
Such barbarous modes, such rude arbitrament,  
Our modern school of ethics doth forbid!  
O Pharisees!  
O Christian code more black, more damnable  
Than heathen rage that spilt the futile blood!  
O whited sepulchre of dead men's bones  
No holy spark shall quicken into life!  
Who wasted Sodom and yet spareth thee  
To taint the Universe with blasphemy?

Thumbs down! his fight is fought, his fate is set!  
Quick! cast him forth to the lean things of prey,  
The stealthy, gaunt things snuffing at the bars  
Of strength and courage that the ruthless years  
Have slow corrupted, and which soon shall fall  
And leave him naked and defenceless.  
And, mirrored in the terror of his eyes,  
Dim shadowy shapes start up from lairs of fear  
And creep from point to point, now swift advance,  
Now 'mazed retreat, to whipped submission cowed  
By some faint flicker of the man he was.  
The hunger-pack his steel thews kept at bay  
Snuff tardy death and scent the carnival,  
And horrid carrion pinions beat the air  
In loathsome expectation of his doom.  
Creep!—Creep!—the grisly circle closes in—  
The ring of death, long cheated, claims its own.

. . . . .

There is no blood upon their hands, good sirs!—  
See here the legal bill of his decease—  
And “Death from natural causes” thereon writ  
By our respected city Coroner,  
And lo! for those that read, ’tis countersigned  
All in the grim sign manual of the three  
Dark sisters, Sorrow, Hunger, and Despair.  
Sic transit!—in the game upon the board  
’Tis dross kings count,—a man is but a pawn!

## REVEILLE.

Up! comrades, up! the night has flown,  
The dawn breaks dim and grey!  
The bugle-call of strife has blown!  
Arm! arm you for the fray!  
O'er hills which man's injustice smote,  
The People's hymn we'll raise,  
Shout! every throat, a major note,  
Australia's Marseillaise!

They call our creed a rebel creed,  
Our flag a rebel flag,  
Who scrawl the autograph of greed  
On every wave-worn crag:  
Who sow in furrows of their greed  
A heritage of scorn,  
And bind the bonds of bitter need  
On peoples yet unborn:

Who ruthless weave the fateful coil  
That binds in bonds of hate  
Lean helotry of hopeless toil,  
Fat harlotry of State,  
Who sow in furrows of their hate  
Twin thorns that never fail,  
The gilded thieves in Church and State,  
The squalid thieves in gaol.

They call our flag a rebel flag,  
Our creed a rebel creed,  
Who scrawl on every wave-worn crag  
The autograph of greed.  
O'er hills which man's injustice smote,  
The People's hymn we'll raise,  
Shout! every throat, a major note,  
Australia's Marseillaise!

## THE ENSLAVEMENT.

Rail not at Mammon, helots of to-day,  
Nor curse Bellona, goddess of the sword,  
Nor Tyranny, of Toil meet overlord:  
This is your covenant—"You must obey!"  
Under its ban your helot-mothers lay;  
Your sires, slave-born to slave-born mothers, poured  
The gluttons' wine, or cringed for bed and board:  
Why murmur then? And whence your blank  
dismay?

Not with red rite of sword on Strife's wan hill,  
'Mid clash of arms and pomp of war's estate,  
Was Freedom slain, and her strong sons laid low,  
But in some wild red dawning long ago,  
When Man, the savage, took his savage mate,  
And beat, and bent, and broke her to his will.



## EVIL.

Not Beelzebub, but white archangel, I  
Turn the dim glass and shift the sands again,  
And touch the eyelids of the sons of men  
Lest they forget—forget and drowsy lie  
In Fate's unfurrowed fallow till they die—  
As seed that quickens not for dawns that leap  
From out the dark of immemorial years,  
With kiss of wind and sun and wizard tears  
Of fugitive clouds to wake them from their sleep.  
With milestones I have set the crumbling sod  
Of human judgment that they stray not wide,  
Nor languish lost in labyrinths always;  
And smile in pity when I hear them pray  
That Wrong's rude whips from them be turned  
    aside,  
Who call me Evil—not discerning God.

## BALLADE OF AUTUMN.

Down harvest headlands the fairy host  
Of the poppy banners have flashed and fled,  
The lilies have faded like ghost and ghost,  
The ripe rose rots in the garden bed.  
The grain is garnered, the blooms are shed,  
Convolvulus springs on the snow-drop's bier,  
In her stranded gold is the silver thread  
Of the first grey hair i' the head o' the year.

Like an arrant knave from a bootless boast,  
The fire-wind back to his North has sped  
To harry the manes of a haunted coast  
On a far sea-rim where the stars are dead.  
Wistful the welkin with wordless dread,  
Mournful the uplands, all ashen sere—  
Sad for the snow on a beauteous head—  
For the first grey hair i' the head o' the year.

Time trysts with Death at the finger post,  
Where the broken issues of life are wed—  
Intone no dirges, fill up the toast  
To the troops that trip it with silent tread,  
Merry we'll make it tho' skies be lead,  
And March-wind's moan be a minstrel drear—  
A truce to trouble!—we'll drink instead  
To the first grey hair i' the head o' the year.

South Esk sings on where the furze-fires spread  
But we'll mourn no more as of old, my dear,  
When gorse flames golden and briars flush red  
With the first grey hair i' the head o' the year.

## JUNE ROSES.

O Red Rose of June,  
Like a lingering ember  
From fires of December  
Rekindled for boon,  
When a wild afternoon  
Like a grey ghost goes gliding  
And creeping and hiding  
From a sorrowful moon—  
A reproachful white moon!

O Red Rose of pain,  
Like the last spark that flashes  
From smouldering ashes  
Of love on the wane!  
Thro' the pitiless rain,  
And the wind's wistful sobbing  
A dead march is throbbing  
Again and again,  
And for ever again.

O Red Rose new born,  
Like a scimitar flaming  
And flashing and shaming  
Life's fear and its scorn,  
Levin love-lilt new torn  
From storm-torrents sweeping  
From fountain heads leaping  
From lips of the morn—  
Of Hope's evergreen morn!

Rekindled for boon,  
When the genii of sorrows  
Of all the to-morrows  
Combine and commune  
In a wild rebel rune,  
Bright symbol and token!—  
Full foreword fain spoken!—  
O Red Rose of June!—  
Brave Red Rose of June!—

## A YEAR AGO.

You are dying! I hear them say—

Alack! and alas! that the young should die!  
But my heart beats back to a yesterday,  
Where the swallows wheeled in a lilac sky,  
And a song floats up from the far away,  
The heart's own music that lives for aye.

There's a road that leads to the heart of the Spring,  
A winding pathway with many a turn,  
And ever the bells of the fairies ring,  
And ever the poppy-hearts blaze and burn;  
Time sits a-dream where the roses cling  
By the road that leads to the heart of the Spring.

There's a road that leads to the peace o' the grave,  
A strait, strait road where the nightshade clings,  
And the heart that withheld, or the hand that gave  
Shall soon be accounted as little things.  
You are dying! God! how the gray  
Chokes the red gold of the yesterday.

There's a road that windeth from East to West,  
From North to South, as the earth roads go  
It is fevered with fires of the heart's unrest,  
It is sodden with tears you may never know.  
They say you are dying! Nay, whisper low!  
You died with the roses—a year ago!

## THE DESTROYERS.

We are the Arch-Destroyers! white-handed, soft  
and fair,

We kneel at the shrine of Fashion, our watchword  
"Never Spare!"

We are the Arch-Destroyers! timid-souled, frail and  
slim,

Who have ravaged earth's war-worn borders to their  
faintest, furthestmost rim.

Only the great dumb sorrow, that never was clothed  
in words,

Only the unwritten anguish of an army of bright-  
winged birds,

Measures our meed of triumph—echoes it every-  
where—

We are the Arch-Destroyers, our watchword "Never  
Spare!"

We are the Arch-Destroyers! for us have the ships  
gone forth

And wrestled with dark and danger and the frost-  
fiend of the North!

We are the Arch-Destroyers! for us the ice gleams  
red,

Where, on the Arctic ice-floes, the seal-calf mourns  
her dead.

We, who have never shivered 'neath the shreds of  
a wretched clout,

Send for a splendid caprice our toiling bond-slaves  
out!—

And never a sea so sullen, and never a sky so grey,  
That they flinch from the face of danger and nerve  
them to disobey.

We are the Arch-Destroyers! woes of the world  
attest!—

For us are the reeking altars of sacrifice daily  
drest!—

From the poles to the burnt equator our minions  
have riven and torn

From the shuddering brute creation the glories that  
we have worn.

The jewels that blazon bravely on bosom and  
haughty head

Flash forth with a baleful lustre grim messages from  
the dead!

The gold that is girt about us in bracelet and brooch  
and stud,

Is heavy with guilt of murder—is tarnished with  
mire and blood.

We are the Arch-Destroyers!—timid-souled, soft,  
and fair—

Queens of the world of Fashion, whose queendoms  
are everywhere,

Quick!—to your posts, ye hallions! wielders of fire  
and steel,

Ours is the right pre-emptive to harry, and not to  
heal!



There is treasure yet for the winning, where the  
bones of the lost men lie!

There is treasure yet for the buying, no ransom but  
blood will buy!

Spare not, an ye would serve us! Serve us not,  
an ye dare!

For we are the Arch-Destroyers, our watchword  
"Never Spare."

## THE LOST FAIRIES.

They come no more with the dancing feet,  
Where the daffodil chorus rang sweet, so sweet;  
Fairies o' mine, have ye fled for ever?  
Shall we meet no more as we used to meet?

They come no more and the wheels run slow,  
And the laughter is hushed that I used to know;  
The white owl cries in the twilit meadow  
Where our revels rang in the long ago.

O a fairy came knocking one day, one day,  
At the meadowsweet gate where we used to  
play—  
I heard him knock, but my heart was weary,  
And I sent him weeping away, away.

And ever since then, tho' my heart be sore  
With waiting and watching, they come no more;  
And the lilies have stolen their golden sandals,  
And the poppies are flaunting the gowns they  
wore.

Ah! ever since then, in the noon o' the flowers,  
When the lights are soft in the fairy bowers,  
I sigh and sigh for the banished laughter,  
For the singing soul of the wasted hours.

Do they mourn me, I wonder, as one that passed  
While the sentinel snapdragons slumbered fast?  
Or is it they seek me, all loyal-hearted,  
And dream they shall find me at last, at last?

I know not; ever the red suns rise  
And roll to their rest in the western skies,  
But the loved, lost voices are silent, silent,  
And leaps no light to the darkened eyes.

Only when twilight lifteth her wand  
And turneth the glory to shadowland,  
I hear in the stillness a sound of weeping—  
And know the meaning, and understand.

They have passed the boundaries mortals know,  
Where the asphodel blooms and the dream-stars  
glow,  
Tho' I seek them, seek them till suns be ashes,  
I shall never find them wherever I go.

They will come no more with the dancing feet,  
Where the daffodil chorus rang sweet, so sweet;  
Where the white owl cries in the haunted meadow,  
We shall meet no more as we used to meet.

## THE REBEL.

Down the Mitchell Kylie bred him, where the rust-  
ling reedbeds shiver ;  
Kylie swore the devil fed him with ungodly wind  
and flame ;  
He was wild as mountain torrent, running riot to  
the river—  
Never stockyard fence would hold him, never fear  
of man would tame.

So he roamed a royal rebel, while the Springtime  
brought the wattle,  
And the Autumn came with wild geese and the  
whirring wing of quails ;  
And the reedbeds rippled laughter, or they moaned  
like drums of battle,  
Still he snorted his defiance of the tackle and the  
rails.

Rising six and never handled—all the local boys  
contended  
That the chestnut was a waster with a curse upon  
his head,  
That he wasn't worth the trouble of the fences to be  
mended,  
And the chump that went to break him might be  
broken in his stead.

That the outlaw colt would beat him, ten to one  
they betted Kylie,  
As he drank his "Jimmy Woodser"; but he splut-  
tered like a squid.  
He'd a "stocking" planted somewhere and they  
loved to twit him slyly;  
"Think oim grane, do yez," he grumbled, "to be  
partin' up a quid?"

But, jogging gently homeward, putting two and two  
together,  
"By the hokey!" muttered Kylie, "but oi've got  
thim in me hand;  
Charlie Ferguson 'll roide him if th' baste 'll carry  
leather:  
An' to yard him German Joey an' the Flynnns 'll  
give a hand."

"New Year's Day we'll run the yearlin's from the  
paddick down the river,  
An' the chestnut sure 'll lead them till we come  
forninst the lane,  
Then he'll break an' wheel an' gallop—faith we'll  
nab him thin or niver,  
He'll be tame as anny donkey whin we bring him  
out again!"

Then Kylie raised discussion and the wildest specu-  
lation—  
"Touch of sunstroke!" was the verdict when he  
took them ten to one.

But the joke was past the wisdom of the wily combination,

So they settled down to waiting for the New Year's bill of fun.

. . . . .

Rolled the sunfire o'er the ridges, till the dead-gold ears o' barley

Shimmered back a sullen challenge to the lances of the day.

By the stockyard gate they mustered—German Joe, the Flynns, and Charlie:

And Kylie looked as doleful as a bishop at a play.

Then they made their calculations for the riding of The Rebel;

Paddy Kylie and the German, with the yearlings for a bait,

Would stampede them up the river, straight as sling can throw a pebble,

And the others would outflank them in the scrub at Murphy's gate.

Up the river-flat like lightning to their hoofstrokes' muffled thunder

Ran the yearlings, with the chestnut half a chain or so in front;

At the scrub, he wheeled and snorted, Charlie's pony slipped—a blunder:

And The Rebel raced for freedom—then McLaughlin joined the hunt.

Up the flat again they brought them, Joe and Kylie  
hard behind them,  
And McLaughlin on the offside on his bay Monaro  
mare;  
With a rush upon the gateway and a crack of whips  
to blind them,  
And—The Rebel missed his moment by the turn-  
ing of a hair!

“Aisy! Aisy!” shouted Kylie. “’Tis a two-chain  
road, remimber:  
An’ th’ finces, if he thried thim, sure they wouldn’t  
stop a cow;  
Up by Mac’s we’ll separate thim, where th’ rails is  
stiffer timber—  
’Tis th’ stockyard fince ’ll hould him very shortly  
annyyhow!”

Up by Mac’s they blocked the yearlings—just a mo-  
ment stood The Rebel:  
Just a moment, like a statue—scorn in every flash-  
ing curve;  
Then full tilt upon the four-rail—but the rushing  
cords sang treble,  
And they scarred him with their stockwhips as  
they baulked him in his swerve.

Close, and closer still, they pressed him, where the  
stockyard gaped to hold him,  
And Kylie’s voice was broken and it rose in little  
squeals,

“By the hokey! Take him aisy! Do you think the  
fince ’ll hould him?

Holy Moses! But the divil’s moighty handy wid  
his heels!”

“Yarded!”—Just the hush, unbroken by a twitter  
or a rustle,

’Twixt the lightning’s livid terror and the peal  
that shakes the ground;

Then a play of whipcord sinews and a launching  
heave of muscle,

And a crash of splintered top-rail, as he landed,  
safe and sound.

Kylie wept and swore together; Dan McLaughlin  
shouted, “Stop him!”

And the others yelled like demons as they held  
the lane below;

“Four-rail fences capped with wattle,” laughed the  
German, “dot will wop him,

Mit dose wombat holes, to jump her he would  
grazy be!” said Joe.

Four-rail fences capped with wattle, and like tun-  
nels, dark and hollow,

Crumbled take-off side and landing, ran the wom-  
bat holes beneath.

For a breathing space he poised him—then he flew,  
as flies the swallow:

There was gripping hard of bridles, there was grit-  
ting hard of teeth.



For we knew before he struck it, ere his terror-neigh  
had sunken

To a pitiful low moaning, and the big sobs took  
his breath,

Hot with fever-fire of conquest, with the lust of cap-  
ture drunken,

He had weighed it in the balance—he was leaping  
to his death.

Kylie cursed the broken, bright thing lying huddled  
in the hollow,

And the German said: "We beat him!" But we  
knew the beggar lied,

For The Rebel raced for freedom by a track we  
dared not follow

To the reedbeds and the rivers 'way beyond the  
Big Divide.

## WATCHING.

I prayed for the wind of the South,  
As I swung his cradle slow,  
And my heart was aye in my mouth,  
Lest the life of my babe should go  
On the feverish panting breath  
Of the sullen November noon,  
Out where the ships o' Death  
Sail 'neath a wan white moon.

A bittern boomed in the dusk,  
And the winds of the night were wild;  
And, pent in its earthly husk,  
The soul of my restless child  
Beat 'gainst the bonds of breath;  
O God! must it journey soon  
With the crews of the ships o' Death,  
That steer by a wan white moon?

Night paled to the dawn's eclipse,  
And the moon hung low in the sky;  
Still I watched with my heart on my lips  
Lest the child that I loved should die,  
Should pass with the dawn's first breath  
O'er the bar where the ebb-tides croon,  
And the lights of the ships o' death  
Wane dim 'neath a wan white moon.

## THE TALISMAN.

A star above the stormy wrack  
Of all to-day's distresses;  
A glint of gold that threads the black  
Of thorny wildernesses!

We build our castles of desire  
O'er fens of black disaster:  
And bind our souls in bonds of hire  
Unto an alien master.

But o'er the dark horizon line  
That bounds our skies o' dreaming,  
Still, still we see the lodestar shine  
Where Faith's far hills are gleaming.

To-morrow Hope will build again  
O'er shards of ancient sorrow,  
To-day we tread the vales of pain,  
We'll climb the hills—to-morrow.

## THE HEATHEN OF TO-DAY.

Haste not, pale zealots, cross in hand,  
To peoples far away;  
They rage within your native land,  
The Heathen of to-day.

Their altars mock the sullen skies,  
They worship unafraid,  
With daily human sacrifice,  
The Juggernauts of Trade,

Black Competition's altars smoke;  
The people's veins run dry;  
Mammon's accursed vultures choke  
The glory of the sky.

Hyssop and rue and mandragore  
Fringe Fashion's fetid marge;  
The helot sinks beside the oar  
On Luxury's gilded barge.

The Heathen sunk in mire of creeds,  
And riot of excess,  
Hedged by historic wrong that pleads  
For all unrighteousness!

Ecclesiastic lords that mock  
Humanity's poor need,  
And sacerdotal granaries lock  
With triple bars of greed!

Judicial murderers, whose hands  
Encompass misery!  
Despots who hold or loose the bands  
Of human destiny,

Who, born and bred within the bond  
Of Macchiavellian bars,  
Conceive no deity beyond  
Their piteous avatars,

Who offer human sacrifice  
To idols made of dross,  
And spit upon the fearful price  
Of Christ upon the cross—

Yea! in their blind idolatry  
Sloth-slackened sinews strain  
To lift the Lamb of Calvary  
Upon the Cross again!

For these! for these that break and bleed  
To glut their follies new,  
These for whose sake that Christ would plead  
“ They know not what they do!”

—Meek zealots, let your lamps be lit!  
Haste! win them while ye may!  
In Earth's high places proudly sit  
The "Heathen" of to-day!

## A SEA SONG.

O softer than Slumber and sweeter than Mirth  
That is Sorrow's half-brother,  
Is thy call to the weary, the children of earth,  
Sea Mother! Sea Mother!

The poor souls, the pent souls, the people that pine  
Where the church bells are pealing;  
O succour them, soothe them with largess divine  
Of thine exquisite healing!

From the blinding white pathways that blistered  
their feet,  
From the fear-folk beside them,  
Close cradle them, Sea Mother, mother most sweet!  
And hold them and hide them!

From the Barmecide boons of Life's bitter-black  
wine,  
From the storm-stress and smother,  
Clasp them close in those soft arms, those strong  
arms of thine,  
Sea Mother! Sea Mother!

## A GALLOP OF FIRE.

When the north wind moans thro' the blind creek  
courses

And revels with harsh, hot sand,  
I loose the horses, the wild, red horses,  
I loose the horses, the mad, red horses,  
And terror is on the land.

With prophetic murmur the hills are humming,  
The forest-kings bend and blow;  
With hoofs of brass on the baked earth drumming,  
O brave red horses, they hear us coming,  
And the legions of Death lean low.

O'er the wooded height, and the sandy hollow  
Where the boles to the axe have rung,  
Tho' they fly the foeman as flies the swallow,  
The fierce red horses, my horses, follow  
With flanks to the faint earth flung.

Or with frenzied hieroglyphs, fear embossing  
Night's sable horizon bars,  
Thro' tangled mazes of death-darts crossing,  
I swing my leaders and watch them tossing  
Their red manes against the stars.



But when South winds sob in the drowned creek  
courses

And whisper to hard wet sand,  
I hold the horses, the spent red horses,  
I hold the horses, the tired red horses,  
And silence is on the land.

Yea, the South wind sobs 'mong the drowned creek  
courses

For sorrows no man shall bind—  
Ah, God! for the horses, the black plumed horses,  
Dear God! for the horses, Death's own pale horses,  
That raced in the tracks behind.

## ANATHEMA.

The earth is cursed! Grey sky and sullen sea  
And bitter wind—like a half-stifled groan  
From some blind gulf of outer darkness blown,  
Where legioned wrong moaneth her broken plea  
Because of Faith that trusts unceasingly  
Thro' unavailing ages. Where is God?  
Hath He forgot? Or drowsy doth He nod  
On lonely hilltops of Infinity?

Silent! all silent! To your tasks, ye boors  
And human clods that grovel in the dust,  
And serve Oppression for her bitter bread!  
Blind, bloodless worms with senses dull as lead!  
Spawn of Starvation and the Spoiler's lust,  
The earth is cursed!—and only Greed endures!

## RED POPPIES—WHITE ROSES.

Red poppy blooms a-flaunting  
Bold lips to every bee,  
White roses' perfume haunting  
The very soul of me  
With touches light and taunting  
On chords of memory.

Red poppies, death-o'ertaken,  
White roses turned to dust—  
In larger lands unshaken  
By mould or moth or rust,  
Will life wake love-forsaken?—  
Behold, the gods are just!

Red sunrise, white moon-setting,  
The seasons wax and wane,  
Nor heed the torrents fretting  
To mingle with the main,  
Nor Sorrow's salt dews wetting  
Life's perished blooms in vain.

Beside the stream's in-flowing,  
Betwixt twin-paths of fate  
One stands aghast at going—  
And one sore-grieved to wait  
Recalls red poppies blowing—  
White roses at the gate.

## AT EVENSONG.

Grandmother sits, when the light is fading  
Behind the western horizon bars,  
When come the spirits of sleep invading  
The dreamy dusk of the world of stars.

Grandmother looks, when the lights are failing,  
Failing, failing o'er field and lawn,  
Out through the dark where the ships are sailing  
To a haven of rest in a rose-red dawn.

Trembles a song in the silence, linking  
The world-old past with the yet to be,  
Like harbour lights thro' the sea-mists blinking,  
The old, old music, "Abide with me."

Grandmother sits where the veil is lifting,  
And life and death are the self-same bond—  
Twin pilots now, when her barque is drifting  
Toward the silent bar of the Great Beyond.

Soft shine the stars in the dreamland meadows,  
Where the gleaners whisper of ways that part,  
And sheaves that withered behind the shadows  
Where the hot life seethes in the old world's heart.

Grandmother sits with her world behind her,  
Where the shadows tremble on life's worn way,  
Straining dim eyes through the mists that blind her,  
Where a lone star gleams in a world of gray.

In the vale of the shadows the children, sobbing,  
Tell of lost treasures the years sweep o'er,  
And the hearts of men through the years are throbbing  
With the old life-hunger for evermore.

But Grandmother looks, when the lights are failing,  
Failing, failing o'er field and lawn,  
Out through the dark where the ships are sailing  
To a haven of rest in a rose-red dawn.

## SONG OF THE AXE.

A song for the sword! where the red blood poured  
An oblation to earthly glory;  
They have pledged its name to eternal fame,  
In the pages of song and story.

A song for the pen! the cosmic pen,  
By honesty's clean hand wielded,  
It has set more stars on our 'scutcheon bars  
Than ever the lordly steel did.

But stronger than these, and braver than these,  
With a music more meet for singing,  
Swell out from the trees, thro' the centuries,  
The echoes of axe strokes ringing.

Wherever the beat of resolute feet  
Down the vale of the years is falling,  
From the war-worn flanks of their out-post ranks,  
The song of the axe is calling.

O the song of the axe on the westward tracks,  
By the camp fire ruddily leaping—  
'Twas the Marseillaise of the roving days  
That wakened the land from sleeping.

They heard it ring where the snow-streams spring,  
And the arrows of tempest hurtle,  
As it leaped with a flash and a quivering crash  
To the heart of a mountain myrtle.

Where the carriages swerve round the clean-railed  
curve

That clings to the mountain's shoulder,  
You can read its signs in the ranks of the pines  
Where the prostrate monarchs moulder.

O music and mirth of the cities of earth,  
O levin of light and laughter!  
From the forests ye sprang where the axes sang  
Their lyrics of ridge and rafter.

It has poured no tears on the restless years,  
Its march is no march of terror,  
In the skies that are 'tis a steadfast star,  
Set high o'er the ways of error—

When the last bright blade that a proud part played  
In the pageants of power and plunder,  
Doth plough the plain for the fertile grain,  
Still the conquering axe-tones shall thunder,

## SHIPS.

The tide sweeps out across the roaring bar,  
 The wild and ravening bar,  
 (Ah, well that such things be!)  
 The tide sweeps out by sun or moon or star,  
 And bears the ships to sea.

The ships o' Fate that steer by stranger stars,  
 By wan and wistful stars,  
 O'er seas of Circumstance,  
 Argos that dare unknown horizon bars  
 To cast the nets of Chance.

The wrecks creep in across the moaning bar,  
 The sad and sobbing bar,  
 (Ah, God! that such things be!)  
 The wrecks creep in by sun or moon or star,  
 Lean largess of the sea.

The cliffs are flecked with flakes of flying foam,  
 Of bitter, blinding foam:  
 The fear-blind albatross  
 Wheels shrieking by the harbour lights of home  
 A liturgy of loss.

I sent a ship across the sea lang syne—  
 (I see the white sails shine  
 Thro' moony mists that flood the far seaways)  
 And all my life went with this ship o' mine  
 Thro' days and nights o' days.



I sent a ship across the sea of years—  
The hungry, hurrying years—  
The cruel years that pass and give no sign  
Of drifting hull or livid tempest spears  
That brake this barque of mine.

And still I wait and watch beside the sea—  
The liling, laughing sea  
That bore me back nor plank nor broken spar—  
And see in dreams this ship that went from me  
Creep in across the bar.

## RECOMPENSE.

Let misers keep their gold, kings keep their power,  
And petty princelings hug the chains of pride,  
Place-hunters flaunt the triumph of an hour,  
Which Time's myrmidons swiftly shall divide!  
I claim no part or place within the train  
Of pageantry, or aught that pageant gives—  
Nor join in vain *Te Deums* o'er the slain,  
Or hope that dies, or recreant faith that lives!  
But in the larger life which circles all,  
From lowest unto highest, brake nor bound  
Shall keep mine own from me, or steal withal,  
Or rival claimants baffle or confound!  
My right to live, not to myself alone;  
My right to toil for that which others share;  
My right to bring to Truth's white altar stone  
Heart's incense of high thought, and lay it there;  
My right to oneness with the souls that dare  
For Right's dear sake the Tyrant's beck and nod,  
To lead the listless legions of despair  
By paths of nobler fellowship to God;  
Life's wine, heart's treasure—these mine own shall  
be,  
Gift of the years, all other gifts above!  
Live pulsing hearts, warm human sympathy!  
Let misers keep their gold—my gold is Love.

## SOCIETY.

O bubble blown on rotting seas of Crime!  
Wan iridescence 'gendered of Decay,  
Ignis fatuus whose fallacious ray  
Dances a dance of death above the slime—  
Beneath you lie the promises of Time,  
The power, the pride, the hope of yesterday—  
Magnificence of nations passed away  
Like phantom puppets of forgotten mime.  
What legioned valour beating bars of breath  
Has stifled in your dungeons of Dismay!  
What love shall sit in darkness for your sake  
Till Hate no seas of sophistry shall slake  
Shall sweep your tainted loveliness away,  
O bubble blown from bloated lips of Death!

## BITTER-SWEET.

The sacred fires are cold,  
 O Love! O Heart of Gold!  
 Beyond the sobbing of the sundering sea  
 A spectre sits and waits  
 By Memory's bolted gates,  
 And calls, and calls across the years to me.

Nor wreath of rose or rue  
 Fate wove for me or you:  
 The sands run out, the blackening brands expire  
 Where passion sits and moans  
 With eyes as dry as stones  
 Beside the ashes of her lost desire.

Nor spark shall warm the clay,  
 Nor gold shall gild the grey,  
 The harvest ripens for other hands to win;  
 No more for Love's dear sake  
 Shall the old sweet music wake  
 Where the "glory-sky" leaned low on Ta  
 Mahinna.

The sacred fires are cold,  
 O Love! O Heart of Gold!  
 Life's red wine dyes the desert at our feet,  
 But aye from years behind,  
 A restless, homeless wind  
 Comes laden with hearts' incense, bitter-sweet.

## THE CITY OF SLOTH.

The city of a thousand gates  
That ope on all the seas,  
A thousand fleets that bear the freights  
Of opulence and ease!

The city of a thousand gates  
That ope on all the lands,  
Whose fruitage falls, whose fullness waits  
To fill her high commands!

Boast not her pride, ye aldermen,  
Ye pharisaic few!  
Who know not that dread moment when  
Nemesis sups with you.

Her legions, pitiless and stark,  
Have slipped oppression's chain,  
To surge, death-drifted thro' the dark,  
And claim their own again.

Reckless ye dare the unseen odds,  
Take heed, ye hooded owls!  
And turn ye, turn ye to your gods,  
Or e'er the man-pack howls!

Your pride is false, your boasting lies,  
Your feasting tragedy;  
Your triumphs peer thro' haunting eyes  
Of human misery!

Around your boards the vampire brood  
Which veils its traitor face  
In patriot domino and hood  
Claims its dishonoured place!

Power and more power, your captains strive  
For victories of an hour!  
Blindfold, but desperate ye drive  
The blindfold steeds of power!

Wealth and more wealth, the pigmy power  
That holds your helots tame,  
Shall turn to ashes in the hour  
That sees your skies aflame!

Wealth and more wealth, the petty pride,  
Slow compassed, swift undone—  
Nineveh in the dust doth hide!  
And where is Babylon?

Quick! to your gates! the pent flame leaps,  
To whelm your brittle dross;  
Too late! the red wing'd terror sweeps  
Your tottering towers across!

Wolf and grey wolf—Nemesis nods—  
Take heed, ye hooded owls!  
And turn ye, turn ye to your gods,  
Or e'er the man-pack howls!

Wolf and grey wolf—the balance turns—  
To-morrow's winds at play  
Shall whistle o'er unhonoured urns  
Of immemorial clay!

## THE UNDERSONG.

(Fleet Welcome.)

O the bannered sea is gay, and the shores keep  
    holiday,  
And the hot life-tide leaps high  
To the fluttering flags adip, to the pride of ship and  
    ship,  
As the glittering hulls go by.

Is it tribute meet for Power, for the bubble of an  
    hour?  
Is it homage for the brave in fight  
To Might, the overlord of the red and ruthless  
    sword;  
To the bright blade bared to smite?

O the World-call thrilling thro'! O the watch-  
    word ringing true  
O'er the petty paths we dare!  
Where the glimmering grey hull glides to the sob  
    of sundering tides  
And the pulses of the World beat, bare.



'Tis the undersong that rings thro' the inner soul of  
things!

From the Tropics to the Poles it runs;

Waking, waking souls from sleep with a resonance  
more deep

Than the thunder of your twelve inch guns.

List! 'tis throbbing, throbbing now from the Leeu-  
win to Cape Howe,

From Otway to the lone Gulf shore!

'Tis the call of race to race that shall quicken Time  
and Place,

Till war shall be no more—no more!

'Tis the call of man to man, cleaving bars of creed  
and clan

As your steel bows cleave the foam;

'Tis a beacon burning bright for the homeless hosts  
of Right,

Ever beckoning, Come home! Come home!

So it's true, brother! true to the solemn star and  
new

That burns in the skies above;

Ship and sister ship we speak, and the ensign at the  
peak

Is the star—the steadfast star of Love.

## DISINHERITED.

(Here and there, a little apart from the laughing crowd that surged in the traffic-ways of Melbourne streets during Fleet Week, little groups of Aborigines in gaudy second-hand apparel, stood and watched the illuminations.)

'Mid her radiant raiment of laughter and light,  
Of her splendour the pity,  
You are drifting like ghosts of the carnival night  
Of the beautiful city.

As a wan wind of March when the forest is stirred  
With Autumnal foretoken,  
You pass, and the lights and the laughter are blurred  
With a sorrow unspoken.

Sere Autumn leaves whirled on the eddy stream  
Of the conquering races,  
Sad elves from a wistful, wild glamour of Dream,  
O faces, brown faces!

High over the mirth and the merriment, hark  
O'er the gay saturnalia  
The cry of a spirit that moans in the dark—  
"Australia, Australia!"

The croon of a mother fast clutched by despair  
That shall never know healing,  
A Hagar's lament for the child that she bare  
Thro' the music is stealing.

But deep in the dark of your slumbering eyes  
Burn no Sibylline traces,  
Where the lost Alcheringa fire smoulders and dies,  
O faces, brown faces!

Deaf, deaf are your ears to the passion and pain  
Of a grief unavailing,  
Dumb syllables set to the sobbing refrain  
Of swans sunward sailing.

Wild children, sad children, deep whelmed by the  
roar  
Of the tide that effaces,  
You shall pass and your forest shall know you no  
more,  
Brown faces! Brown faces!

'Mid her radiant raiment of laughter and light,  
Of her splendour the pity,  
You are drifting like ghosts of the carnival night  
Of the beautiful city.

## WY YUNG.

Beyond the ridge of Never Forget  
Is a grey ghost land where no glad gleam flashes,  
Where run the rivers of Old Regret,  
And the red fruit withers to dust and ashes.  
Over the edge of the World it lies  
Where curlews call and the reed beds shiver,  
And Time is a sorrow that never dies  
In old Wy Yung by the Mitchell river.

There youth came tripping with lightsome feet,  
Brave youth with the clog of a curse upon it,  
Where poppies flamed in the whispering wheat,  
And young winds tilted the blue bell's bonnet:  
Sad youth came sighing with heart athirst,  
And a passionate prayer to the Cosmic Giver:  
Ah, God! for the faith that was fairest, first,  
In old Wy Yung by the Mitchell river.

Change on the grey land has worked his will  
Nor softened a line on its face abhorred,  
Gapped are the gum trees on Calvert's hill  
Like time-thinned hairs on an old man's forehead;  
And a spectre stalks thro' the dappled maize  
Where dead flags rustle and tassels quiver,  
A spectre dark as the bygone days  
In old Wy Yung by the Mitchell river.

## A FRAGMENT.

The dark day dies! Be still my heart, nor sorrow  
For God's aloofness or for man's dismay!  
Haply to usward sets some radiant morrow  
Behind the dark To-day!

Haply doth shine, beyond these eyes' discerning,  
Serenely steadfast thro' estranging fears,  
The patient star of our divinest yearning  
Above the stormy years.

The false, the true, the shadow and the real,  
That mock our souls with finite "Yea" and "Nay"—  
Haply from these shall rise our White Ideal  
And bide with us alway.

## LA MISERE.

O black Sargasso! choked lagoon where rot  
The human wrecks by Fortune's backwash hurled  
From out the pulsing man-seas of the World  
To hide as things that are and yet are not.  
Grim stagnant pool wherein the craft of Greed  
Trawl 'mid the slime and clutch for guerdon  
fair,  
Here warm gold of a drowned woman's hair,  
Here youth's lost sunshine and its careless creed,  
And here a heart's hushed music! "Nets o' lies,  
What treasure bring ye from the depths to-night,  
Or pearl or shell-trove?"—"Nay! but laughing  
light  
That once made morning in the children's eyes."

## CROOKED RIVER.

A league o' brown with lights o' gold,  
And, 'gainst blue sky's resistance,  
Far hilltops gleaming white and cold  
Across the purple distance!

Beyond the hum of city streets,  
Their strife and stress and scorning,  
Again through worn world-pulses beats  
The magic of the morning.

I see the lone hawk wheeling high,  
The blown, brown reed-beds shiver,  
And faint and far the hills that lie  
Beyond the Crooked River.

O haunted hills! O holy hills!  
Where wizard lights are streaming  
O'er Youth's enchanted window sills  
From hinter-skies of dreaming;

Whereon we heard in hushed respite  
Of Echo's elfin laughter  
Faint footsteps of the Infinite  
On floors of His Hereafter.

O hills behind the hollow dark  
Where human wisdom falters,  
And Hate keeps vigil, stern and stark,  
By Custom's petty altars!

It seems so long since life was love  
From God's heart brimming over,  
The lark-song in the blue above,  
The brown bee 'mong the clover:

So long, by drifting dawns and darks  
Since—(Christ! Thy creed grows colder!)  
God lived among the ironbarks  
On Lookout's ragged shoulder.

What tho' since then (Ah, ruthless change!)  
On charts of land Australian,  
They've writ my hills a mountain range  
With title cold and alien!



“Australian Alps?” No pulses leap  
To greet that title olden,  
Where hushed in memoried twilight sleep  
Life’s glamoured things and golden.

“Australian Alps?” Nay, nay, there thrills  
Through Memory skies a-quiver  
The glory of *my hills*—“*the hills*  
*Beyond the Crooked River.*”

## SOUL FERRY.

There's a mist upon the river  
Where it runs by Peopletown—  
(O the ferry by the river—O the swiftly-running  
sands!)  
O the ghostly winds a-shiver  
Where the life-lights flicker down  
And the strangers take the ferry where the stream  
is ribbed and brown,  
In the boats not made with hands.

There's a boat beside the ferry,  
And a silent boatman steers—  
(O the lilt of lipping water as he dips his muffled  
oar!)  
For they drown beside the ferry,  
Where the ribbed brown current veers—  
And an eerie chant comes floating—floating back to  
mortal ears  
On the winds of Evermore.

And never day rolls westward,  
And never night comes east—  
(O the rustle of their garments, and the wan wind  
sobbing low!)  
But riotward or restward,

From the fast or to the feast  
They must journey by Soul Ferry—Yea, the greatest  
and the least—  
Where the ribbed brown waters flow.

Still they dream beside the ferry  
Where the silent boatman waits—  
(O the whisp'ring of the waters, where the soul-  
ships settle down!)  
Ay, they dream beside Soul Ferry  
With its motley, mystic freights,  
Creeping outward, creeping inward by the veiled  
and silent gates—  
By the gates of Peopletown.

## PRESCIENCE.

One red rose bud upon Life's thorny tree,  
Like a closed gate unto dominions bright,  
Which Time shall open with his Key of light,  
Beside that gate I kneel, a devotee,  
And hear the hidden priests their chants intone,  
Within the mystic inner temple where  
The heart of all the Universe beats, bare,  
Thro' parting portals, O red rose half blown!  
To-morrow pirate winds will spread their wings,  
Their soft sail-wings of faery gossamer,  
And, jealous, I shall hear thro' drone and whirr,  
The slumbrous serenade the brown bee sings,

One last, last, hot red sunset, beauteous close  
Of cycled song, that sinks into a sob  
Of funeral zephyrs, wailing as they rob,  
Petal by petal, my red, full blown rose.  
Shall it be so, bright talisman? Shall I,  
Soul-sickened, see thy full-orbed bloom decline?  
Nay! With thy rich heart brimmed with Nature's  
    wine,  
I pluck thee now! I cannot watch thee die!

## TA-MAHINNA.

Moon islands out in the shimmering splendour  
Of the moon's white pathway of silver fire;  
Moon shadows touching a dream-world tender—  
O Ta-Mahinna! O heart's desire!  
Were you only a dream with a dream's surrender,  
A moon-spun glory that must expire?

A fate-flung phantom out in the distance,  
A rose in the greyness of life's grey chart,  
Shall I wrestle with fiends in a fool's resistance?  
O Ta-Mahinna! my restless heart  
Craves thee again with a fierce insistence,  
And we are drifting—apart!—apart!

O Ta-Mahinna! Shall Time's dividing  
Quench the white lustre of moons gone by?  
Is there no land of a great abiding  
For the beacons that beckoned from lip and eye,  
Love's lost stars out in the darkness hiding  
Beyond the gates of the grave's good-bye?

No lotus land where the gods are tending  
The lone lost stars of our exile drear?  
No glad green twilight of peace descending

From Love's own land of the Always Near,  
Where we'll gather the blossoms of joy unending,  
With the faith of the children that know not fear?

In the radiant lap of a land unsmitten  
By death and darkness and dreams that die,  
Where no soul walks in the darkness, bitten  
With the listless langour that makes no cry,  
Shall they live in the essence of things unwritten,  
When the hills are dust and the seas are dry?

Who shall say—while the dead are sleeping,  
And fettered souls in their prisons fret—  
If this be the end of our time of weeping?  
We dream it may be, and yet!—and yet—  
If one should waken with pulses leaping  
For glad remembrance—and one forget?

Ever the hunter of lives is calling—  
Calling for sacrifice fair and fresh,  
Where the strong souls wrestle their bondage  
galling,  
And the weaklings languish in bond and mesh;  
Shall he ever have ruth for life's red rain falling—  
For the strong soul cleaving the quivering flesh?

Nay!—It is written!—the pale years, fleeing  
Like a train of ghosts to the far away,  
Bear all our treasures beyond our seeing,

And the earth-heart yawns for the senseless clay  
That has lived and laboured and spent its being  
Like the swift, sweet breath of a summer day.

Ah Ta-Mahinna! My heart is yearning  
For life's full measure—and life is o'er,  
And I am hungered and sick with learning  
The weary wisdom of world-old lore.  
This is the end! God!—the slow sands turning—  
And then the darkness—for evermore.

## HAMILTON.

Wild and wet, and windy wet falls the night on  
Hamilton,  
Hamilton that seaward looks unto the setting sun,  
Lady of the patient face, lifted everlastingly,  
Veiled and hushed and mystical as a cloistered nun.

O the days, the cruel days creeping over Hamilton  
Like a train of haggard ghosts, homeless and ac-  
cursed,  
Moaning for a fleet o' dream silver-sailed and won-  
derful,  
Moaning for a sorrow's sake, the fairest and the first.

O the moon, the lonely moon, leaning low on  
Hamilton,  
Thro' the years that sunder us the dead come back,  
come back,  
Scent of white eucraphia stars blown on winds of  
Memory,  
Glint and gleam of fagus gold adown the torrent's  
track.

Half my heart is buried there, buried high on Hamil-  
ton,  
Lonely is the sepulchre with never stone for sign,  
Where the nodding myrtle plumes stand like sable  
sentinels  
And the ruddy rimony wreathes the hooded pine.



Half my heart is yearning yet, yearning yet for  
Hamilton,  
Hamilton beyond the surge of sobbing Southern  
main,  
O the croon of wistful winds calling, calling, calling  
me,  
Where the mottled mountain thrush is singing in  
the rain.

We shall ne'er go back again, back again to Hamil-  
ton,  
Heart o' me, our track is toward the heart of burning  
day,  
Hills beyond the call of hills beaconing and beckon-  
ing—  
Westward, westward winds the track, a thread of  
dusky grey.

## PHASES.

Just a flush of pleasure  
And a flash of pain  
For a half-guessed treasure  
Found and lost again:  
Faery fancies flocking,  
Hopes and fears astart,  
That's when Love comes knocking—  
Knocking at the heart.

Just the glad surrender  
To a power that rings  
Earthward from the tender  
Godward heart of things:  
God's own hands a-swinging  
Heaven's gates apart,  
That's when Love is singing—  
Singing in the heart.

Gold of lost Septembers  
Blown across the grey,  
Hope's dead camp-fires' embers,  
Ghosts beside the way:  
Mute the lyre, unlifted,  
Sad the skies athwart,  
That's when love has drifted—  
Drifted from the heart.

## LOOK UP.

O phantom bars and futile bands!  
O fettered feet of clay!  
O blind unfaith and folded hands!  
The East is growing grey.

Look up! Hope's rainbow hangs athwart  
More joys than life can hold!  
O loving heart, O longing heart,  
The skies are dropping gold!

O heavy heart, O laggard trust,  
O lips too faint to pray!  
Tho' dauntless dust go down to dust  
Yet each shall have his day.

From alien seas no man may chart,  
From stress of wind and foam,  
O weary heart, O waiting heart,  
Your ships are beating home!

## THE KEENING.

We are the women and children  
Of the men that mined for gold:  
Heavy are we with sorrow,  
    Heavy as heart can hold;  
Galled are we with injustice,  
    Sick to the soul of loss—  
Husbands and sons and brothers  
    Slain for the yellow dross!

We are the women and children  
Of the men that died like sheep,  
"Stoping" the stubborn matrix,  
    Piling the mullock heap,  
Stifling in torrid "rises,"  
    Stumbling with stupid tread  
Along the Vale of the Shadow  
    To the thud of the stamper-head!

We are the women and children  
Of the miners that delved below—  
Main-shaft and winze and crosscut—  
    Opening the silly "show."

Look at us! Yea, in our faces!  
God! Are ye not ashamed  
In the sight of your godless fellows  
Of the men ye have killed and maimed?

They moiled like gnomes in the "faces,"  
They choked in the "'fracteur" fumes,  
And your dividends paved the pathways  
That led to their early tombs.  
With Death in the sleepless night-shifts  
They diced for the prize ye drew;  
And the Devil loaded the pieces—  
But the stakes were held by you!

Ye were the lords of Labor;  
They were the slaves of Need.  
Homes had they for the keeping,  
Children to clothe and feed!  
Ye paid them currency wages—  
Shall it stand to your souls for shrift  
That ye bought them in open market  
For "seven-and-six a shift?"

Wise in your generation,  
Cunning are ye in your day!  
But 'ware of the stealthy vengeance  
That never your wealth shall stay!

They won it—yea, with their life-blood;  
Ye laughed at the sacrifice;  
But by every drop of your spilling  
We shall hold you to pay the price!

Ye have sown the wind, to your sorrow;  
Ye have sown by the coward's code,  
Where the glimmering candles gutter,  
And the rock-drill bites on the lode!  
Ye have sown to the jangle of stampers,  
To the brawl of the Stock Exchange,  
And your children shall reap the whirlwind  
On the terms that the gods arrange.

And ye, who counsel the nation,  
Statesmen who rule the State!  
Foolish are ye in your weakness,  
Wise are we in our hate!  
Traitors and false that pander  
To the spillers of human life,  
Slaying with swords of silence  
Who dared not slay with the knife!

And ye of the House of Pilate,  
Ye who gibber of Christ  
At the foot of the golden crosses  
Where the sons of men are triced!

Ye who whimper of patience,  
Who slay with a loose-lipped lie  
At the word of the fat blasphemers  
Whose poppet-heads mock the sky!

We are the women and children  
Of the men that ye mowed like wheat;  
Some of us slave for a pittance—  
Some of us walk the street;  
Bodies and souls, ye have scourged us;  
Ye have winnowed us flesh from bone:  
But, by the God ye have flouted,  
We will come again for our own!

## CITY HUNGER.

A tent 'neath the gum trees?—O No! No!  
Give me the stream of which I am part—  
The red stream filling the old world's heart  
With life and laughter, with rapture and glow.  
Give me the battle the strivers ken  
With comrades beside and the goal before.  
O tears and laughter and strife to the core—  
I love you! love you, cities of men!

Fair are the halls where the white stars peer  
Thro' green arched casements from kindly skies!  
But the cities of men have a thousand eyes  
That beacon and beckon the distant near.  
With Life on the march and Time on the wing  
To a wild world measure, what matter the odds?  
Or roses strewn by the hands of the gods?  
Or hyssop and rue that the seasons bring?

Sing not of far-folden hills agleam,  
Of sun-kissed valleys where Strife is not,  
The sylvan Nirvanas where ripe to rot  
The fruits of Toil and the flowers of Dream.



A leaf among leaves I had rather be tossed  
'Mong the soul-ships cleaving a treacherous tide—  
Or freighted for ports of the Barmecide,  
Or bound for the deep sea docks o' the lost.

A tent 'neath the gum trees? No! not I!  
I'll march with the rabble, clean and unclean,  
Judas, Barrabas or Nazarene—  
And die as I lived when it's time to die.  
Till from the banquet that mortals ken  
The lights wane low and the guests depart—  
O tears and laughter and strife to the heart,  
I love you! love you, cities of men!









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